

Progress of implementation activities relevant to combat IUU fishing for the BOBLME II project

South Asia Report

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Regional Workshops on

**Information Exchange on Monitoring Control and
Surveillance of Combating IUU Fishing**

24-26 November 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

BOBLME project targets

A Regional Plan of Action to curb IUU Fishing is in place

All project countries are implementing National Plan of action to curb IUU fishing

Tools and policies to combat IUU fishing developed and implemented.

Regional Training Partners were identified and Regional training platform(s) operational

20% reduction in IUU fishing over the 2014

NATIONAL WORKSHOPS TO INITIATE ACTIVITIES ON CURBING IUU

Country	Outcomes on IUU Fishing	Key Interventions	Actions Needed
Bangladesh	High reliance on artisanal fishers with poor documentation; rampant juvenile bycatch and gear violations.	Ratification of PSMA, Strengthened co-management initiatives, awareness campaigns, and improved data collection mechanisms.	Centralize data, increase port enforcement, and promote community-led monitoring.
India	Domestic IUU issues, including underreporting by small-scale fishers and challenges with foreign vessels entering the EEZ.	National action plan for IUU fishing, adoption of gear marking initiatives, expanded vessel monitoring systems (VMS), and alignment with regional RFMO standards.	Expand VMS, ensure data transparency, and enhance inter-agency coordination.
Maldives	Challenges with monitoring foreign vessels and transboundary IUU activities. Fisheries laws updated but enforcement is inconsistent.	Ratification of PSMA, improved vessel monitoring systems, stricter licensing, and engagement of local fishers in monitoring efforts.	Strengthen MCS, and improve regional collaboration.
Sri Lanka (from EAFM)	Overfishing of high-value species and lack of compliance with international norms. Coastal conflicts between artisanal and industrial fishers.	Ratification of PSMA, enhanced gear marking, stricter enforcement of mesh size and closed seasons, and adoption of evidence-based policy measures.	Expand gear marking, train enforcement staff, and promote alternative livelihoods.

FEEDBACK FROM THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF BOBP-IGO

- IUU fishing poses a **transboundary challenge** requiring regional cooperation.
- Engage diverse stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of measures against IUU fishing.
- There is a **need for member countries** to build institutional and technical capabilities for better governance.
- Expedite the signing of the RPOA-IUU during a significant regional event to formalize commitments.
- Enhance the enforcement of existing fisheries management regulations to prevent IUU fishing.

Typology of IUU Fishing in the Bay of Bengal

ILLEGAL

- **Foreign / Poaching in EEZ:** Foreign vessels operating without authorisation or breaching licence terms.
- **Domestic Illegal:** National vessels violating rules (licence, zones, gear bans, closed seasons/areas).
- **Illegal in RFMO Areas:** Breaches of IOTC or other RFMO conservation measures.

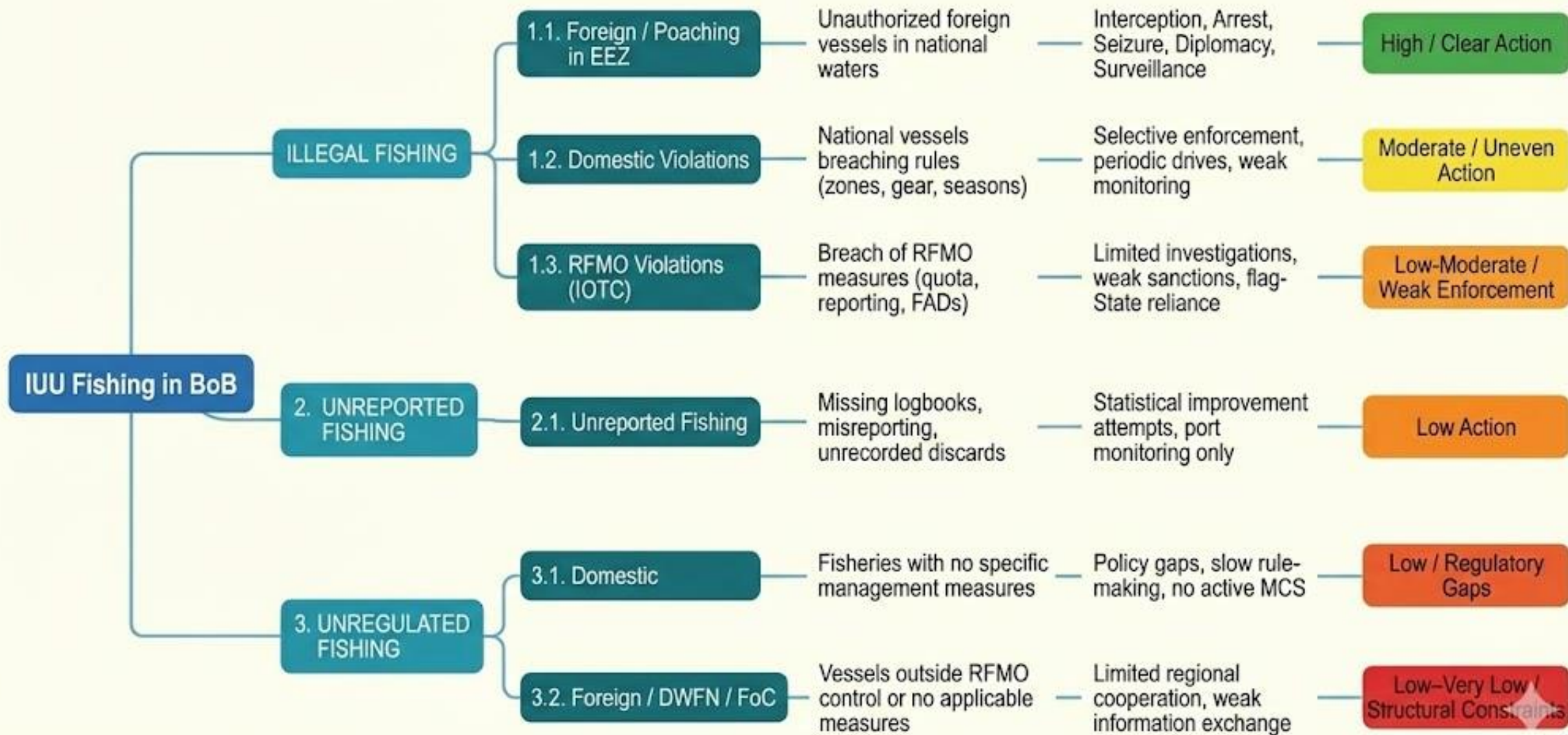
UNREPORTED

- **Non-reported Catches:** Missing logbooks, informal landings, unreported effort.
- **Misreported Catches:** Wrong species, areas, or quantities entered.
- **Unrecorded Discards:** Discards and bycatch not captured in reporting systems.

UNREGULATED

- **Domestic Unregulated** BoB vessels in *unmanaged fisheries* or high-seas areas with no specific measures.
- **Foreign Unregulated (DWFN / FoC):** Vessels from non-member / non-cooperating RFMO States, or those fishing where no applicable conservation measures exist.
- **Stateless / FoC Operations** Vessels outside effective flag-State control.

IUU Fishing in the Bay of Bengal (BoB) - Types, Responses, & Intensity



Why domestic illegal fishing happens?

State of resources

Over-exploited

Low Productivity

[feedback loop]

Inter-sectoral competition

Follow the leader

Fish olympiad

Slow adjustment phase

outlawing of prevailing practices

Overriding customary practices

Flag state weakness

Inadequate resources

Stakeholder non-cooperation

Output 1.2.1: BOBLME countries join and implement a Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) on IUU fishing

	Bangladesh	India	Indonesia	Maldives	Myanmar	Sri Lanka	Thailand	Malaysia
Bangladesh	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
India	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Maldives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Myanmar	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Thailand	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Malaysia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

Cross-country Fishing Matrix

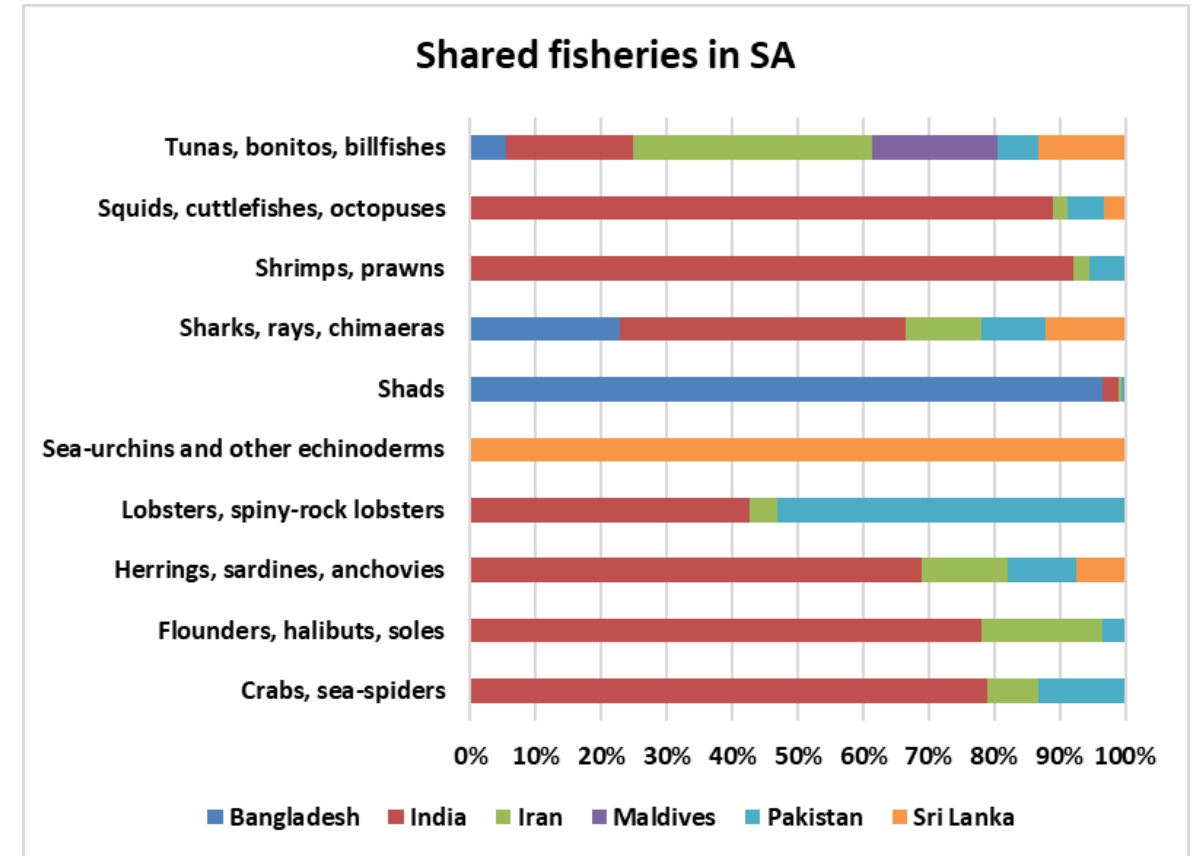
In Bay of Bengal region, majority of the species are shared and catches are largely coming from shared stocks

Management challenge

Common fishing practices

Common market

A status paper is prepared with management options for consideration of SA countries



Source: FAO FishStatJ

Species Groups as per FAO Classification

BOB RPOA-IUU

Vision

Sustainable fisheries through regional action

Objectives:

- Prevent and eliminate IUU fishing
- Strengthen regional cooperation
- Align fisheries policies internationally



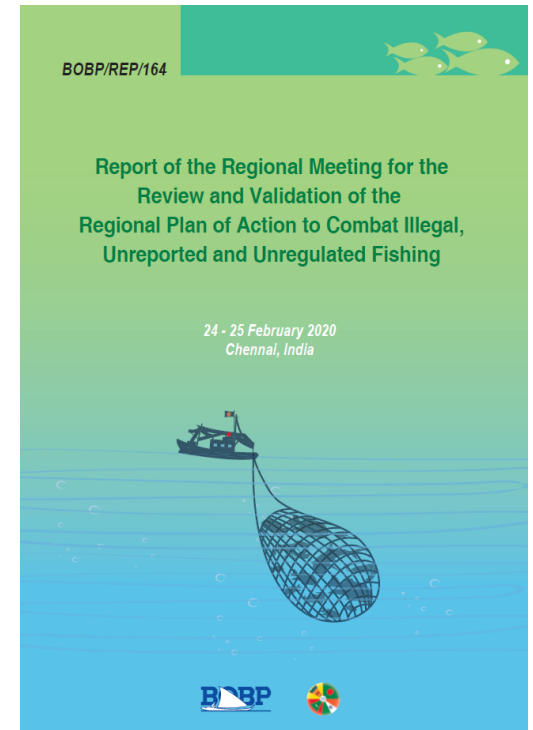
Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA-IUU)

(From the Exclusive Economic Zones of the Member-Countries of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation)

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing has been one of the biggest banes of fisheries in recent decades, putting the sustainability of fish stocks in peril. It's a scourge that has affected fisheries in all the continents and is undermining the efforts of nations in bringing back the depleted fish stocks to their original conditions. Its prevalence ranges from national waters to the sea areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) and from small-scale operators to large industrial-scale fishing vessels. The 2022 edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)¹ highlights the fact that the fraction of fish stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels has exhibited a decreasing trend, from 90.0 percent in 1974 to 64.6 percent in 2019².

Expecting global population to cross the 9 billion mark by the middle of the twenty-first century, availability of safe food would continue to remain the biggest challenge before mankind. And in the seafood sector, IUU fishing, if allowed to continue unabated, will act as a major deterrent in the contribution of fisheries to the global food and nutrition security and employment of millions of people. While the global agenda spearheaded by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provides a strong focus on elimination of IUU fishing within a certain time-frame, the real action lies with the countries to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. The countries need to first demonstrate action within their own jurisdictions and second through close cooperation and coordination with the neighbouring countries covering a wider seascape.

The 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations, with its global scope and aimed at all stakeholders whether government or non-government, has set out principles and international standards of behaviour for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. The CCRF further emphasizes on the role of fisheries as a vital source of food, employment, recreation, trade and economic well-being for people throughout the world, both for the present and the future generations and should, therefore, be conducted in a responsible manner. However, IUU fishing presents a contrasting picture of actions that are damaging the fisheries and biodiversity in most parts of the world's oceans.



- (i) **Development and harmonisation of NPOA-IUU** and Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (NPOA-MCS);
- (ii) Establishing a **Regional Record of Fishing Vessels**;
- (iii) Developing **standardised inspection procedures** and SOPs for port state measures;
- (iv) Promoting **joint Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance** (MCS) and enforcement activities;
- (v) Enhancing **information sharing** and data transparency;
- (vi) **Implementing harmonized catch** documentation schemes;
- (vii) Providing **technical assistance** and support to member countries.

Outlined 20 comprehensive actions to strengthen regional fisheries management and combat IUU fishing.

Output 1.2.2. National POAs-IUU and national IUU MCS systems and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) strengthened

Supporting flag, port and coastal state responsibilities specified in the NPOAs

Supporting the review and updating of existing NPOAs and preparation of NPOA-IUUs where they are not yet endorsed (India).

Output 1.2.3 Tools and policies in support of curbing IUU fishing

Improving fisheries governance

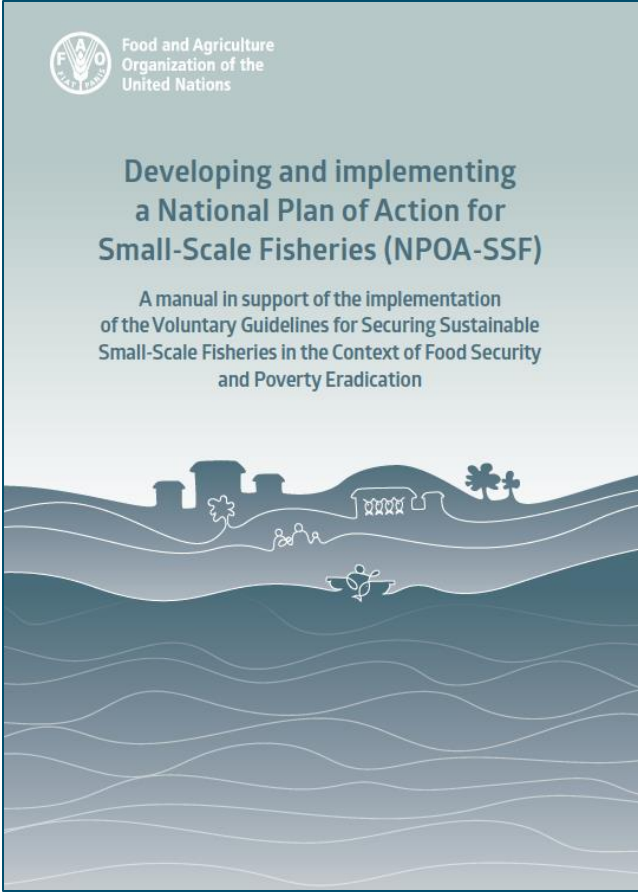
EAF framework adopted for legal review

Assessment shows countries have multitude of legal and policy measures.

Gaps still exist but improving.

		BGD	IND	MLD	SRL
Fisheries policy	Number of legislations assessed	11	6	16	6
	Alignment with 82 EAF requirement	51	37	45	33
Fisheries Primary Legislation	Number of legislations assessed	10	5	1	2
	Alignment with 82 EAF requirement	21	20	34	17
Fisheries Secondary Legislation	Number of legislations assessed	5	9	8	21
	Alignment with 82 EAF requirement	6	16	16	16
Level of Alignment		Medium	Medium	Medium-high	Medium

NPOA-SSF in the BOB region

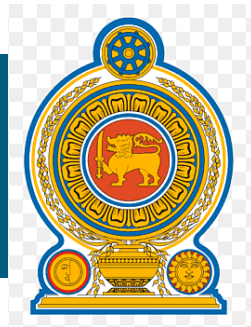


Inception

Capacity Building of National Task Force members

*Road map for NPOA-SSF as
a regional initiative.*

*Hosted by SRI LANKA
Nov 2025*



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Regional Inception Workshop on National Plan of Action for Small Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF)

20 - 22 November 2025

Lotus Tower, Colombo, Sri Lanka



BOBP-IGO's Role in Advancing NPOA-SSF

Catalyze the process: Provide regional experience, technical backstopping, and cross-country learning platforms.

Leverage BOBLME Project:

Organisation of national workshop on SSF

Capacity building for co-management & ecosystem approach

Strengthening MCS capacity to curb IUU fishing in SSF (RPOA-IUU).

BOBSAFE: Regional plan for Safety & Decent work of SSF



Output 1.2.4 Capacity building

- **Collaboration with UNODC**
 - **02** Regional programmes and **01** National programme (Bangladesh) ~ 70 people from Coast Guard, Navy, coastal Police and DoF trained.
 - Advantage of joint patrolling (Coast Guard + DoF) demonstrated.
 - Enforcement officials informed about fisheries regulations.

Capacity building

- **Collaboration with SEAFDEC**
 - **02 Regional programmes – 16 Fisheries officials participated.**
 - **First-hand experience to PSMA implementation in Thailand.**
 - **Cross-learning opportunities.**



Ongoing and upcoming activities

National Assessments (started with Bangladesh in November 2025)

Review of NPOA-IUU

IUU Risk Assessment

Preparation of National Status Paper

Setting up/ Linking with National Working Group on IUU fishing

In-country need-based training programme

THANK YOU

